

Sub 1

We claim:

1. A method of converting text to speech comprising:

2 receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix
3 or a suffix;

4 for each textual unit,

5 locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6 appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein one said textual unit in said list is indicated as not having
an associated speech sample in memory and said method further comprises:

3 passing said indicated textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;

4 receiving a speech sample converted from said indicated textual unit from said
5 secondary text to speech engine; and

6 appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein each said speech sample in said memory comprises a
2 processed recording of a voice talent and said secondary text to speech engine comprises a
3 phonetic text to speech engine based on said voice talent.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein a consecutive plurality of said textual units in said list
2 represent a whole word, said method further comprising:

3 for each textual unit in said consecutive plurality of said textual units, locating an
4 associated speech sample in said memory;

5 creating a speech unit by splicing together said plurality of associated speech samples;
6 and

7 appending said speech unit to said output signal.

1 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising, after said splicing, processing said speech unit
2 to remove discontinuities.

1 6. A method of pre-processing a text file comprising:

2 receiving a text file;

3 parsing said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one of a
4 word, a prefix or a suffix; and

5 for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units
6 corresponds to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, adding said stored
7 textual unit to a list.

1 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising, for each one of said parsed textual units, if
2 said one of said parsed textual units does not correspond to one of said stored textual units,

3 marking said parsed textual unit as being out of vocabulary; and

4 adding said marked textual unit to said list.

1 8. The method of claim 7, where said marking comprises pre-pending a character to said
2 textual unit.

1 9. A text to speech converter comprising:

2 means for receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a
3 word, a prefix or a suffix;

4 for each textual unit,

5 means for locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6 means for appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 10. A text to speech converter comprising a processor operable to:

2 receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or
3 a suffix;

4 for each textual unit,

5 locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6 append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 11. A computer readable medium for providing program control to a processor, said
2 processor included in a text to speech converter, said computer readable medium adapting
3 said processor to be operable to:

4 receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or
5 a suffix;

6 for each textual unit,

7 locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

8 append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 12. A text to speech conversion system comprising:

2 a text file pre-processor operable to:

3 receive a text file;

4 parse said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one
5 of a word, a prefix or a suffix; and

6 for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units
7 corresponds to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, add said
8 stored textual unit to a list;

9 and a textual unit processor operable to:

10 receive said list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word,
11 a prefix or a suffix;

12 for each textual unit, of said list:

13 locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

14 append said ~~associated~~ speech sample to an output signal.

1 13. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising a textual unit and a speech
2 sample associated with said textual unit, where said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a
3 suffix.

1 14. A data structure including a field for a textual unit and a field for a speech sample

2 associated with ~~said~~ textual unit, where said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix.

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